CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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Bulgarian Army Maneuvers in the Vakerel-Ikhtiman-Kostenets Area DATE OF INFO. PLACE ACQUIRED This is UNEVALUATED 1. On 1 October 195h, an infantry regiment coming from the direction of Plovdiv was observed dismounting a train at the Kostenets (N h2-18, E 23-52) railway station. On the road leaving Kostenets, the following were observed: a. Six SU-75 (sic) self-propelled artillery mounts; b. Four h5 mm. antitank guns; and c. Six 120 mm. howitzers. 2. On 2 October 195h, near the Radio Vakarel antenna, and about three kilometers northwest of Vakarel (N h2-33, E 23-h3), infantrymen were observed lying down in holes on either side of the road. Further on, between the radio station and the village of Vakarel, infantrymen were observed with field equipment, marching in small groups in a southeasterly direction, through the fields, as if attacking a position. On the same day, about midnight, a long column of infantrymen dount the equivalent of a battalion) was seen descending from Vakarel and going towards Ikhtiman and was about 10 kilometers from Ikhtiman. The men were wearing overcoats and carried packs, and their rifles were slume across their shoulders. 3. On 3 October 195h, between Samckov and the Samokov-Sofia and the Samokov-Ikhtiman (via Shishmanovo; N h2-27, E 23-36) crossroads, men were seen installing a field telephone line which probably had been laid a few days earlier. A traffic policeman directs traffic in the vicinity of the bridge across the Iskir River from which point starts the road to Ikhtiman. 25X1 1. On October 195h, no troops or military activity were observed on the Borovets (N h2-16, E 23-37) — At Gara Kostenets, two artillery officers with setchess and map-cases were observed.	COUNTRY	Bulgaria	REPORT		
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with rifles across their shoulders were seen walking. At Lechta Khan (sic) traffic policemen of the artillery and officers and men of the artillery were seen near houses next to the road. Across the fields, a group of soldiers were observed and on a wooded ridge there were two camouflaged 76.2 mm. cannons under the trees. Between Lechta Khan and Ikhtiman, horse-drawn carts and trucks	25X1
loaded for the most part with artillerymen were seen. As far as Ikhtiman, traffic was handled by artillerymen. At Ikhtiman, soldiers from the infantry, engineers, and signal corps were observed. Road police were infantrymen. At a distance several kilometers from Ikhtiman, there was a very high, caterpillar-track vehicle, armed with a long barrel and resembling an obsolete type of self-propelled gun. No further military observations were made between Ikhtiman and Sofia.	25X1 25X1
Comment: Maneuvers which started on 2 October 1954 or earlier were still in progress on 8 October 1954. These maneuvers appear to have had as their problem an advance on the Sofia-Plovdiv axis, since the center of gravity stretched from Vakarel to Ikhtiman, Lechta Khan (sic), Momin Prakhod (sic), and Kostenets. It is not known if the maneuver area went beyond Kostenets. The visible front does not extend more than one kilometer from the road. The arms represented were the infantry, artillery, and signal corps. No armored vehicles were observed other than the obsolete self-propelled vehicle listed in Para. 4 above. No airplanes took part in these maneuvers. It is possible that the column identified on 27 September 1954 and originally observed on 26 September 1954, was to take part in these maneuvers since it was headed in the direction of Ikhtiman. Because of its composition, it certainly was not a part of the Samokov garrison, at least not in its entirety. On 6 October 1954, a train composed of approximately 50 cars loaded with troops was observed on the railway track to the north of Flovdiv. The maneuvers reported on above definitely consist of an offensive action by the Bulgarian Army, with the 2 Bulgarian Army being the enemy. Attacks on the flanks of the 1 Army were allegedly to be made to the north and to the south of the Sofia-Plovdiv axis.	25X1
Comment: Possibly Peshe Khan (N 42-24, E 23-53)	25X1
	25X1

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